

# Ohio will treat entire inland lake in fight against algae

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ST. MARYS — Ohio's largest inland lake will be treated this spring with a chemical aimed at heading off the toxic algae blooms that have hurt area tourism.

The state says it will treat all 13,000 acres of Grand Lake St. Marys, instead of just part of it, with

aluminum sulfate beginning April 1. The alum is used to neutralize phosphorous, which gets into the lake from manure and chemical runoffs. The phosphorous feeds blue-green toxic algae, which produces a nerve toxin that can sicken humans and kill pets and other animals.

The toxic algae led to previous lake closures and advisories against

swimming and boating and even warnings against touching the water, all of which were devastating to the local tourism industry. This year's alum treatment will start two months earlier than last year's treatment and should allow the phosphorous to bind to the alum more effectively and improve water quality, officials said.

"We are committed to improving the water quality at Grand Lake St. Marys," James Zehringer, director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, said in a recent statement. He said a healthy and thriving lake will benefit not only residents of Mercer and Auglaize counties, but all Ohioans.

The Ohio Environmental Protec-

tion Agency plans to use about \$1.6 million in Ohio EPA Water Pollution Control Loan funds left over from last year when the state treated just the center of the lake with alum. The extra money for this year's \$5 million cost for treating the whole lake will come from the Ohio Water Development Authority's Distressed Watershed Loan Program.